

ANTHOLOGIA:

OR,

A COLLECTION OF FLOWERS.

IN BLANK VERSE.

By the Rev. PHILIP BRACEBRIDGE HOMER, A.M.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Pallentes violas & summa papavera carpens,

Narcissum et flores, _____

_____ mea quos Amaryllis amabat.

Virg. Ecl. 2.

April 23d, 1789.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR; AND SOLD BY ROBSON AND CLARKE, NEW BOND-STREET,
AND BY MURRAY, FLEET-STREET; AND LIKEWISE BY THE BOOKSELLERS AT
COVENTRY, BIRMINGHAM, AND WARWICK.

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OXFORD

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A N T H O L O G I A

I N F A N C Y.

I F there be ought like bliss this earth can boast,
Sure it inhabits in thy simple breast,
Toy-taken Infancy. What time the spring
Pours her unnumber'd flowers o'er hill and dale;
Pleas'd have I mark'd the sportive prattling tribes
Running with eager haste from bank to bank
To snatch their mingling dyes; they heed not then
The friendly voice that chides their lingering steps;

Sill will they loiter, still each gaudy hue

~~'Lure them aside; such charms has Nature's robe~~

For natural heats, unstained by fordid cares,

Nor warp'd by commerce with a guilty world.

Of all thy boasted shews, thou sickly Pomp

Of empty Greatness, where canst thou display

A sight so touching to the soul of man

As children gathering flowrets in the spring?

Oh! 'tis a scene that bids th' impassion'd tear

Start from the gazer's eye, recalls past joys

Almost forgot, and makes us sigh to think

What once we were—as innocent as they!

TO THE

S N O W - D R O P.

THOU who, to Heav'n lifting thy golden brow,

Ey'st unabash'd the glorious orb of day,

I praise thee not: I hate the unblushing front.

But ever let me tell your humbler worth,

Ye

Ye simple Snow-drops, firstlings of the year,
 Fairest of flowers, sweet Harbingers of Spring.
 How meekly do ye hang your silvery heads,
 Like maidens coyly stealing from the view!
 E'en so upon the ground her modest eye,
 That fears to meet th' irreverent gaze of man,
 Beauty unconscious bends; and so, more pure
 Than are your snow-white forms, Sophia strives
 To hide those charms, how matchless! from the world.

TO THE
 C R O C U S.

UPRIGHT as are the thoughts of her I prize,
 Second of flowers, though little canst thou boast
 May charm the sight, or gratify the smell,
 I love thee: for of all this goodly scene,
 Which we behold, nought earlier than thyself
 My soul remembers: in my boyish years
 I've mark'd thy coming with incessant watch,

Of

Oft have I visited each morn the spot,
 Wherein thou lay'st entomb'd, oft joy'd to see
 Thy pointed tops just peering o'er the ground;
 And ah! fond fool, how often hast thou bared
 Their tender sides, till thy too greedy love
 Has kill'd the flowers its strange impatience strove
 To hasten into bloom: so do not ye
 Whom Heav'n has blest with children; but beware
 Lest ye expose your darling hopes too soon
 To the world's fury, there to face those winds,
 Whose bitter biting chills the weakly plant:
 But shield them with your kind and fostering arms,
 Till they have gather'd strength t' abide the frosts
 Which nip life's opening bud; else ye perhaps
 May find your hopes all blasted—e'en as mine.
 Ye much-lov'd Crocuses, while memory lasts,
 I'll hold ye dear; for still shall ye recall
 My infant days, and oh! how great's the bliss
 To think on those: oft doth this soul inhale
 The sweet remembrance, till the strong perfume
 Tortures the sense: for say whate'er you will,

Ye

Ye that delight to brood o'er other times,
 And call to memory departed joys,
 'Tis but a painful pleasure: in themselves
 Our purest joys are intermix'd with cares,
 But in the recollection of those joys
 The fordid dregs of intermingling care
 Sink to the ground, while all the blifs, sublim'd,
 Is essence pure, too pungent to be borne.

T O T H E

V I O L E T.

AND shall the Muse to thee her praise deny,
 Thou best, though most diminutive of flowers?
 For where can Nature through her wide domain
 Boast other odours half so sweet as thine?
 What shall I Sophy scorn, 'cause Sophy's small?
 Though small she be, is she not still a gem
 Which worlds of massy gold could never buy?
 You too, ye Violets, might I ever wear,

E'en as I wear my Sophy in my heart!
 Though the strip'd Tulip, and the blushing Rose,
 The Polyanthus broad with golden eye,
 The full Carnation, and the Lilly tall
 Display their beauties on the gay parterre
 In costly gardens, where the unlicens'd feet
 Of rustics tread not, yet that lavish hand,
 Which scatters Violets under every thorn,
 Forbids that sweets like these should be confin'd
 Within the limits of the rich man's wall.
 So fares it in the world: albeit we see
 Some gew-gaws which the Great alone possess,
 Whate'er is solid good, is free to all.
 Grandeur, then keep thine own: this fragrant flower
 Was kindly given by Nature to regale
 The wearied ploughman, as he home returns
 At dusk of evening to that dear abode,
 Where all his comfort, all his treasure's lodg'd—
 Young rosy Cherubs, and a smiling Wife.
 If he may profit these, he'll jewels deem
 Those big round drops that stand upon his brow,

The badges of his labour, and his love:
 The thought that these from him their good derive,
 And that that good hangs on his single arm,
 Turns toil to luxury, to pleasure pain:
 'Tis this that cools the sun's meridian blaze,
 Bears up his heart, re-braces every nerve,
 And sends fresh vigor to his fainting soul.
 How far more blest is industry like this
 Than schemes of statesmen, who, for private ends,
 Would plunge their country in a gulf of woes!
 And know, ye Great, howe'er ye may despise
 The rustic's labour, 'tis to that we owe
 A nation's happiness, a kingdom's wealth,
 Wisdom in counsel, terror in our arms,
 At home security, and fame abroad.

TO THE

C O W S L I P.

COWSLIP, of all belov'd, of all admir'd,
 Thee let me sing, the homely shepherd's pride;

Fit

Fit emblem of the maid I love—a form
 Gladdening the sight of man, a sweet perfume
 Sending its balmy fragrance to the soul.
 Daughter of Spring, and Messenger of May,
 Which shall I first declare, which most extol,
 Thy sovereign beauties, or thy sovereign use?
 With thee the rural Dame a draught prepares,
 A nectarous draught, more luscious to my taste
 Than all thy boasted trash, vine-nurturing France:
 Maidens with thee their auburn tresses braid,
 Or, with the Daisy and Primrose pale
 Thy flowers entwining, weave a chaplet fair
 To grace that pole, round which the village train
 Lead on their dance to greet the jocund May;
 Jocund I'll call it, for it lends a smile
 To thee, who never smil'st but once a year:
 I name thee not, thou poor unpitied wretch,
 Of all despis'd, save him, whose liberal heart
 Taught him to feel your wrongs and plead your cause,
 Departed Hanway—peace be to his soul!
 Great is that man, who quits the path of Fame,

Who,

Who, wealth forsaking, stoops his towering mind
 From Learning's heights, and stretches out his arm
 To raise from dust the meanest of his kind!
 Now that the Muse to thee her debt has paid,
 Friend of the poor, and Guardian of the wrong'd,
 Back let her pleas'd return, to view those sports,
 Whose rude simplicity has charms for me
 Beyond the ball, or midnight masquerade.
 Oft on that merry morn I've join'd their throng
 A glad spectator, oft their uncouth dance
 Ey'd most attentive, where with tawdry shew
 Ill-sorted ribbons deck'd each maiden's cap,
 And Cowslip garlands every rustic's hat.
 Who that has eyes to see, or heart to feel,
 Would change this simple wreath which shepherds wear
 E'en for that golden circle which furrounds
 The temples of a King? Beneath these flowers
 Sits blooming Health, and ever-smiling Joy;
 While that bright orb, which girds the monarch's brow,
 Is but a crown of thorns to vex the soul
 Of him who bears it. Happiness, thou good,

Which all men pant for, and which few possess,
 Thou art not found in palaces of Kings!
 If thou hast place on earth, 'tis sure thou 'bidest
 'Midst Cots and Villages and rural scenes.
 Let fools with ardor in that chace pursue,
 Whose aim is empire, and possession pain:
 Mine be the lot to stray through Nature's walks,
 But not in gardens, where Man's barbarous skill
 Has starch'd those looser folds I've oft admir'd
 In Nature's robe, and turn'd to lifeless form
 Such artlessness, such elegance, such ease!
 Give me to wander in the spacious fields,
 Or 'long the margin of meand'ring stream,
 Or down the vale, or up yon steep hill's side,
 Where thousand Cowslips cover all the ground
 In wild luxuriance. There within a copse,
 Far from the search of every eye but mine,
 I've mark'd one tall and stately o'er the rest,
 In whose fair semblance Man's majestic mien
 Vied with the softness of a Virgin's grace.
 Thus in some village lone, 'midst trees obscure,

Far

Far from the notice of the busy world,
 I've spied some maiden of more princely tread,
 Of shape more fine, more elegantly turn'd,
 Of manners sweeter, and of hue more fresh,
 Than e'er was seen at modern routs or drums,
 In ancient Barons' hall, or courts of Kings.

T O T H E
 N A R C I S S U S.

THEE too, Narcissus white, whose pliant stalk
 Still weak'ning as it grows, scarce stems the force
 Of wand'ring zephyrs, thee I fain would sing
 In deathless strains with beauties like thine own.
 Had that unhappy youth, who pin'd for love
 Of his own shadowy shape reflected fair
 From the pure surface of the glassy stream,
 Boasted thy graces, it had been no crime
 To have gaz'd enamour'd through the live-long day,
 To have sigh'd in sickness, and then died at last
 With

With hopeless anguish. Though 'tis fable all,
 Nor e'er did Lover grieve his soul away
 For unsubstantial shade, yet well he feign'd,
 Who feign'd this story, when he chose thy form
 To tell what matchless charms that youth beguil'd,
 Who, still desiring what he ne'er could reach,
 And fondly looking on what fondly look'd,
 Hung like a marble statue o'er the flood,
 Till life had left the form he never left.
 Unspotted flower, when scarce the red-hair'd sun
 Had rais'd his front above those eastern hills,
 I've quitted oft my downy couch, to gaze
 O'er all thy graces, while thy silvery face,
 Bath'd in fresh pearly dew-drops of the morn,
 Shew'd like a virgin, from whose tear-wet cheek
 Heart-piercing Grief had rifled all the Rose
 And left the widow'd Lily, there to mourn
 Her partner's loss. If, as I mark'd thy charms,
 It chanc'd that some rude wind came rushing by,
 And bent thee down, thee and thy flag-like leaves,
 Down to the ground, with still elastic force

Recovering still, I've thought thee in my mind,
 Some King furrounded with his fawning train,
 Who watch his motions, copy all his ways,
 Bend as he bends, and, as he rises, rise.

TO THE

P R I M R O S E.

NOR yet thee, Primrose, shall the Muse disdain,
 Theme of her song to choose more pleas'd to tell
 Thine unambitious worth, than sing of deeds
 Of mighty warriors, whose wide-wasting sword
 Unpeoples all this globe, and stains its flowers
 With many a sanguine rill profusely shed
 From veins of kindred man. Thou Primrose meek,
 Deep in the shelter of furrounding leaves
 Sweetly reposest; shrinking from the gaze
 Of bold impertinence, yet to modest eyes
 Open as day; not fearing to be seen,
 Nor set soliciting; not richly rob'd,

But deck'd in simple neatness; free, though coy;
 Beauteous, though pale: so beauteous and so pale
 Art thou, too, Lucy; such thine artless charms
 Thy neat attire, thine unreserved soul.
 Youth's rosy colour blooms not on thy cheek;
 Yet still upon thy face this eye can mark
 So much of loveliness, that Beauty's self
 No more is beauty, when with thee compar'd.
 How have I gaz'd enchanted on thy smile!
 But not that smile which Vanity oft calls
 From her light mind, to catch the wand'ring thought
 Of each regardless youth: thy placid look
 Speaks from a heart of purity, where dwells
 A warm benevolence, which feels for all,
 In all rejoicing. Let me not offend,
 If thus the Muse, enamour'd of her theme,
 Tries, fairest Lucy, from a few short years
 Of blank oblivion to snatch thy name.

D A I S Y.

THEE lowly Daisy, as the year moves on,
 Once more I greet, half-smiling, half in tears.
 Warm gratitude for many a pleasing dream
 In careless infancy by thee bestow'd,
 Shall now record thee on the Muse's page.
 Time was when I beheld thee, and cou'd think
 Earth's variegated lap a bed of flowers
 For Man to rest on; could of thee compose
 A chaplet for my brows, and deem such wreath,
 So simply wrought, a happiness as great
 As this world might afford. O rankling Care,
 Why did'st thou come to chase away a joy
 So pure, so innocent—that dream is fled—
 Yet still, sweet gem, that colour'd all the field
 With thine unnotic'd hue, I still can hang
 Enamour'd o'er thy graces, still can hold
 The regal diadem, with thine compar'd,

A worth-

A worthless bauble. As I've walk'd along,
 Musing on thee, oft have I said, "how bows
 Thy purple-fringed cap beneath the foot
 Of every heedless passenger:" e'en so
 In this uneven world insulting Pride
 Tramples on worth; yet harder is the doom
 Of suffering Man: fair flower, that pressure past,
 Thy beauteous circlet soon shall rise again
 With more becoming charms; but Man, poor Man
 Must sink beneath the load which weighs him down,
 Must 'bide the bitter taunt, and bear his wrongs
 Unheard, unfelt, unpunished to the grave.

TO THE
 F R I T I L L A R Y.

THEE, Fritillary, dearest of all bells,
 A name unknown to Pindus and the Muse,
 Thee let me sing. In willowy mantle clad,
 Where Cherwell throws his fond embracing arms.

Round

Round Magdalen's favourite mead, for beauty fam'd,
 And fam'd for Science more, thy sanguine flower
 Scatter'd in myriads on the blushing ground
 O'ertops the verdant blade, and like a robe
 Of gorgeons purple meets the ravish'd eye.
 Some, who possess thee on that ample plain,
 Tell falsely that on other soil to grow
 Save this, where oft I've mark'd thy crowded cups,
 Thou coyly dost refuse—that boast is vain—
 Yet, for the love I bear to that fair field,
 Where late I linger'd, and which still I hold
 Part my inheritance, I fain would grant
 Thee, choicest flowret, there alone to bloom
 Thine own exclusive privilege. Sweet heads,
 That hang so pensively, as there I've stray'd
 What time the Spring its vital warmth diffus'd
 Through joyous Nature, how I've griev'd to see
 The battering courser with his iron hoof
 Bruising your speckled bonnets: with such rage,
 Such blind unthinking madness, on his car
 The warrior mounted, drives the grinding wheels.

E.

O'er

O'er prostrate foes, who late in order rang'd,
 And grac'd with dazzling armour, like a row
 Of beauteous flowers, shew'd lovely to behold.

TO THE
 L I L Y of the V A L E.

THEE, Lily of the Vale, though last I sing,
 Not least I love thee: precious to my sight
 Is thy neat flower, and leaf of liveliest green
 Reard round about thee like a strengthening wall;
 Sweet too's the odour which thou breath'st to Heav'n.
 How have I fought thee in thy close recess;
 How frequent and how fondly have survey'd
 Thy spire of little bells so snowy white,
 So upright, yet so modestly conceal'd!
 Much dost thou need thy verdant screen, to guard
 Those tender graces from the ruthless storm
 Of hail or driving rain: nor yet to thee,
 Lucy, less caution or less sure defence
 Is wanting, to secure that weakly frame

Too delicately fine: ah! much I dread
 Each ruder blast which threatens to destroy
 A flower so elegant.—Thou, Lily fair,
 Shelter'd in humble spot, there safely dwell'st,
 There flourishest, nor ask'st the genial Sun
 To summon forth thy beauties: if some hand
 Unskilful draw thee from thy lone abode,
 And give thee to his rays, thou droop'st beneath
 Their fervent heat. Ye sons of Wealth and Power,
 Learn hence what mischief Kindness' self can bring;
 If ought of good or just hath charm'd your souls
 In some sequester'd cot, there let it grow,
 There watch and cherish it; but oh! take heed
 How ye seduce it from that lowly shade,
 And call it into day: what much ye lov'd
 In its retreat, may languish in the blaze
 Of open glory, and those warmer beams
 Ye hoped might foster it, may kill your flower.

M O O N - L I G H T.

HERE, on this bank, while shine the stars so clear,
 Come, Lucy, let us sit: how tranquil seems
 All Nature; with what mildness from above
 Yon regent of the night looks down on earth,
 And gives to every herb, tree, plant and field
 A softer green: mark now her virgin front;
 How calm she looks, how open, and how pure!
 Nor, Lucy, on thy paler beauty dwells
 Less sweet serenity; as pure art thou,
 As frank and as benignant as the light
 Of that fair Planet, when no vapour thin,
 Flitting o'er ether, tarnishes her face
 With momentary dimness: she, bright Queen
 Of all those starry gems which deck this vault
 Magnificently built, her silver horn
 Monthly replenishes. From that strong blaze
 Of unexhausted glory, whose quick heat
 Invigorates the world, she still relumes
 Her darken'd countenance. But, Lucy, thou,

When

When Time shall steal those youthful charms away,
 From what full fountain of immortal grace,
 What fun of Beauty, shalt thou then repair
 Thy form's diminish'd elegance? alas
 That female lustre, fairer than all stars,
 And dearer than the light which rules the day,
 Should know no second rising: that, once set,
 Nor months, nor years, nor ages can recall.
 But turn now, Lucy, and survey that Cloud,
 Which comes in gloomiest Majesty along
 To shroud the imperial Moon: its envious shade
 Now creeps upon her argent disk, and now
 Blots it quite out from Heaven: with such stealth
 Malice her thick and baleful darkness draws
 O'er lucid Virtue, and beneath that veil
 Would hide it ever: but as now that Cloud
 Sails on, and back restores the radiant Moon
 To Man's desiring eyes, so pass the mists
 With which fell Envy labours to conceal
 The merit she abhors: thus transient too
 Was that dread storm which, sweeping by the throne

Of England, shook this kingdom with dismay;
 Till rising from the black portentous night
 Which hung upon his beams, our leading star
 Once more diffus'd upon these joyous realms
 The sweetest influence of his sober flame.

T O
 L O V E.

O Thou, or fiend, or angel, by what name
 Shall I address thee; how express thy powers?
 Strange compound of extremes! of Heat and Cold,
 Of Hope and Fear, of Pleasure and of Pain!
 Most credulous Infidel! now trusting nought,
 Now anchoring on a feather: craving all,
 With nothing satisfied; perplex'd with doubts,
 Yet dreading to be sure; surcharg'd with thought,
 Of speech incapable; in absence curst,
 Yet eager still to rush on certain pain!
 Tho' blind they call thee, yet I've known thee, Love,
 More keen and watchful than the sleepless eye

Of

Of that dread serpent whose terrific glare
 Hung like a Comet o'er the Hesperian boughs.
 Nor ken of griping Miser, nor of Lynx,
 Nor his, whom Poets feign'd with hundred eyes
 Argus, nor that majestic bird's which looks
 Undazzled on the Sun, is half so sharp,
 So vigilant as thine. All-seeing Love!
 No look, no motion, gesture, deed, or word,
 No nor the secret counsels of the heart
 Can 'scape thy scrutiny. How wretched thou,
 If ought thou spie'st, which thwarts thine ardent wish;
 And oh! how ravish'd, if thou mark'st one glance,
 Which tells the latent longings of the soul!
 In that high fever the delirious brain
 Coins gaudy phantoms of celestial bliss,
 Of bliss that never comes—for now, e'en now,
 Now, while Love sleeps and eyes the rain-bow hues
 With child-like rapture, and full fondly thinks
 They ne'er shall fade, e'en now comes jealous Fear
 With tottering fist, and thunders at the door:
 At this rude noise alarm'd the dreamer starts,

Looks trembling round, and—finds the vision fled.
 Where's now th' angelic tongue, the dimpled cheek,
 The moisten'd eye-ball, and the hidden blush,
 Or Love's delicious smiles? from dreams like these,
 From airy joys he wakes to solid pain.
 Quick to his fight up springs in long array
 A tribe of devilish ills—the cold Reply;
 The unanswer'd Question; the assenting nod
 Of dull Civility; the careless look
 Of blank Indifference; the chilling Frown
 That freezes at the heart; the stony eye
 Of fixt Disdain; or more tormenting gaze
 Bent on another. These with all the train
 Of Fears and Jealousies that wait on Love,
 Are no imagin'd griefs; no fancied ills
 These; or, if fancied, worse than real woes.
 Such art thou Love: then who that once has known
 Thy countless rocks and sands that lurk beneath,
 Would ever tempt thy smiling surface more?
 Long toss'd on stormy seas of Hopes and Fears,
 How willingly at last my wearied soul

Would

Would seek a shelter in Forgetfulness?
 Oh! bland Forgetfulness, Love's sweetest balm,
 Come, rouse thee from thy bed, if still thou sleep'st
 On Lethe's shore; come, take this willing breast
 And fold it in thine arms; through all my veins
 Thy dead'ning powers infuse; close up each gate
 And avenue to Love; purge off the lime
 That clogs this spi'rit, which fain would wing its flight
 To Sense, to Reason, Liberty and Law.

111749

E R R A T A.

In page 8, line 11, for—Or with the Daisy and Primrose pale,—read, Or with the Daisy and
the Primrose pale.

In page 10, line 18, for—I've spied *one* tall, &c.—read, I've spied *some* tall, &c.

In page 12, line 9, for—the form *he never left*,—read, the form *his mind ador'd*.

In page 18, line 2 of 'To the Lily of the Vale,' for—precious to my sight is thy *neat* flower,—
 read, Is thy *pure* flower.

In line 9 of the same flower, for—So *upright*, yet so modestly, &c.—read, So *neatly* hung, so
 modestly, &c.

Would seek a shelter in Forgetfulness
 Oh! blind Forgetfulness, Love's sweetest balm,
 Come, come, take from thy bed, if thou sleep'st
 On Lethe's shores; come, take this willing breast
 And fold it in thine arms; through all my veins
 Thy deadning powers infuse; let each eye
 And avenue to Love; purge off the time
 That clogs this spirit, which vain would wing its flight
 To Sense, to Reason, Liberty and Law.

E R A T A

In page 8, line 10, "On with the Dance and Merriment" — read, "On with the Dance and Merriment"
 In page 10, line 12, "The Spirit of the Song" — read, "The Spirit of the Song"
 In page 11, line 1, "The Spirit of the Song" — read, "The Spirit of the Song"
 In page 12, line 1, "The Spirit of the Song" — read, "The Spirit of the Song"
 In page 13, line 1, "The Spirit of the Song" — read, "The Spirit of the Song"